

INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSASSINATION
OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

HEARINGS
BEFORE THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS
OF THE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NINETY-FIFTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

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VOLUME IV

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Beverly B. Byron M.C.

Page 231

in Mark Lane's Book

McMillan does not mention Redditt in his book.

Page 234

after King's
vacature who had been
in disguise and
working for the CIA.

Lane writes that King's supporters asked for security,
that they knew that Redditt was there, but were not notified
when Redditt was removed.

Page 256

requested Redditt be
when he returned to
to set up a

Lane writes that transfers of blacks (including Redditt)
raised serious questions that the prosecution would have had
a hard time responding to at a trial.

Page 257

Lane comments on Harold Weisberg's reference to Redditt
as police spy.

and at the Masonic
Floyd Newsum.

Page 264

Lane makes reference to the start of his interviews
with Redditt.

prior to April 4, 1968
notes Redditt as
security because he
of the personalities
ity arrangements
made this coverage
of 10 officers

Page 266

Lane asks why Redditt was pulled off his assignment.
Suggests that answer may have gone up in smoke with Memphis
D.I.D. files.

An hour and a
ed to headquarters
loman was in a
the law enforcement
here was a contract
his family to the
he was allowed to
him. Nothing over
at back to work on
a killed.

Page 273-274

Lane speaks of his first awareness of the "strange
circumstances" surrounding Redditt's removal before King's
death. He says the question was not even considered by the
Justice Department until July of '76.

Lane says Justice Department contemplated why Redditt
was removed from post two hours before murder.

surrounding Red
the threat on his
in a answers.

Asst
ID

courtyard, go up the circle of steps, go west—go east again and then to room 306. Would I be correct about that?

Mr. REDDITT. You would be correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. All right. Now I direct your attention to page 131 of Mark Lane's book, and I am directing your specific attention to the third paragraph.

Mr. REDDITT. Which book is that, counsel?

Mr. JOHNSON. That is Code Name "Zorro", The Murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., Mark Lane and Dick Gregory, which has been marked as exhibit F-185.

Now let me read to you, Mr. Redditt, from the third paragraph here. It says:

According to Redditt

I am quoting now, at least Mark Lane is quoting you, I gather * * *

about half an hour, no more than 2 hours before Dr. King's assassination lieutenant Arkin, who was in intelligence, came down to the station. He said, Ed, they want to see you at headquarters. Redditt was reluctant to leave his post, to abandon the entire security operation to Richmond. Redditt had difficulty leaving, since his plan to cut off a potential escape from the scene, should there be an attempt on Dr. King's life, was predicated upon a functioning team of at least two men.

Now my question to you, Mr. Redditt, does Mr. Lane in his quote here adequately set out the situation of that afternoon?

Mr. REDDITT. No. No.

Mr. JOHNSON. Then, as this appeared in Mr. Lane's book, it is absolutely erroneous; am I correct about that?

Mr. REDDITT. Correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. I have no further questions.

One additional question. You have been asked earlier about a plan. You seem to have suggested "being a policeman maybe I had some ideas in mind about doing something to protect Dr. King," but Mr. Redditt, did there ever come a time, on either the 4th or the 3d or any time before that you went to any of these buildings and checked them out to see whether or not there was anything that might give way to an assassin being in any of those buildings?

Mr. REDDITT. No.

Mr. JOHNSON. Did you ever, knowing the parking area here and the bushes on the embankment that leads directly over to Mulberry Street, did you ever go through the parking lot and maybe either on the afternoon of the 3d or the morning or afternoon of the 4th, just kind of walk through there and look around to see if anybody was sitting over there?

Mr. REDDITT. No; the only thing was by the fire station.

Mr. JOHNSON. So if there ever was a time that you had a plan, the formulation of which was merely in your mind, no more, no less?

Mr. REDDITT. Correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. Because at no time, assuming that you had a plan, did you ever undertake any kind of surveillance or security or whatever to implement. Would I be right then in assuming that even if you had a plan, you weren't sure yourself what the plan would be, assuming that something would happen to Dr. King? Am I correct about that?

Mr. REDDITT. Correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. I have no further questions.

Chairman STOKES. The gentleman is recognized for 1 minute, the

Mr. FAUNTROY. Thank you, Mr.

Mr. Redditt, two quick questions.

One, in response to Mr. Pre

Mr. Newsom in fact perform respect to the actual event or

would have performed had you

Mr. REDDITT. I missed that. I

Mr. FAUNTROY. Yes. I mean

please forgive me. Mr. Richmond

Mr. REDDITT. Would you re

man?

Mr. FAUNTROY. You indicate

you would have contacted someone

you seen it from that window

Richmond?

Mr. REDDITT. I am not aware

Mr. FAUNTROY. You don't know

Second, I have just this question

perhaps an extended answer but

tion of conspiracy that has come

in Memphis and in the fire station

is that you were stripped

police chief who, prior to becoming

been for 25 years employed by

period very close to J. Edgar Hoover

your stripping had to do with

chief felt merited his removing

I wonder if you would just, in

to the committee how you think

of conspiracy.

Mr. REDDITT. Quite a task.

Mr. FAUNTROY. Yes, it is.

Mr. SMOTHERS. Congressman

completely clear to the witness

own testimony or with respect

been considered by this committee

Mr. FAUNTROY. I am asking

own knowledge of his own reasons

for his removal.

Chairman STOKES. The time

Chair will permit the witness

Mr. REDDITT. I think, again,

received or know of or have

involvement within the total

my function in the police department

not add anything, was not a part

scheme or a plan or a conspiracy

Mr. FAUNTROY. Thank you,

the question, and just to be clear

a conspiracy, you do not believe

Mr. REDDITT. Correct.

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116

CIVIL DISORDERSMEMPHIS, TENNESSEE*(February 12, through April 16, 1968)**A Report submitted to Mr. Frank Holloman, Director of Fire and Police,**by**Lt. E. B. Arzin, of the Intelligence Section of the Inspectoral Bureau of the Memphis Police Department.**March 20, 1968 (continued)**On 3/20/68 two instances of Strife and threats were made to burn down both I day, March 22, 1968, the date of the proposed Luther King Jr. And an obscene telephone Councilman, Jerred Blanchard**On 3/20/68 Black Power Groups in South Memphis intimidating teachers and holding classes on 3/22/68. The rumor was Minister, Rev. Ezekiel Bell had made arrangements to Memphis and speak at his church.**On 3/20/68 Local Black Power and other Black Power advocates went to the prison demanding that he be allowed to speak to the inmates. He was however told to leave.**Intelligence sources revealed the planned march on March 22, 1968 was in the S. C. L. C., and C. O. M. E. member, and participation in the march was in the hands of James Morris Lamson Jr., pastor of Central Church, another Negro leader was on the parking lot at Club Paradise on the night of 3/20/68. Furthermore on 3/20/68 Luther King, SCLC leader with leftist leanings to the students at LeMoyne College referring to the students as "niggers", and denouncing the Viet Nam war, stating for their own rights here. Bevel had been a drama Department instructor named Lee, a Cabbage, local Black Power activist, and he observed in the audience.**Police assignments remained controlling of garbage trucks throughout the City, activities, as well as the regular neighborhood**March 21, 1968**On 3/21/68 City Council member J. O. Patterson's proposal allowing a dues passed instead a resolution calling for mediation down with Frank B. Miles, a former Federal**On 3/21/68 Dr. Martin Luther King organizing his Poor People's Campaign, as symbol of the campaign. In Memphis he received a telephoned threat on the Life of a man with what was described as having an*HSCA
JTB

April 1, 1968 (continued)

Threats against the Memphis Police came in from a number of sources between 3:30/68 and 4/1/68. And on one occasion, U.S. Civil Rights Commission worker, Rosetta Miller, who had been participating in the Demonstrations since the start of the Sanitation Strike, told Det. Redditt, that they were going to get him, and if she had a gun herself, she would shoot him herself. This remark was made no doubt because it was known that Det. E. E. Redditt was returning information from the meetings he attended to the Memphis Police Department.

On April 1, 1968 Larry Payne, a Male Negro teenager, who had been shot during the riots, after he had been found looting, and pulled a knife on a Police Officer, was laying in state in Clayborn Temple. The filtration being that his actions were sanctioned by C. O. M. E. and the negro ministers who divided on the issue of non-violence seemed to be wavering at this point in the direction of violence.

April 2, 1968

The Press Scimitar on 4/2/68 under a story captioned, MEMPHIS HAS QUIET NIGHT, quotes Asst. Chief Bill Price as reporting that activity during the night of 4/1/68 had been no greater than usual.

The Commercial Appeal carried a story under the caption: KUYKENDALL ACCUSES KING OF SPARKING MEMPHIS CLASH in which Tennessee Congressman R. Kuykendall on the House floor accused Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. of agitating destruction and hatred in Memphis.

In another story in the Commercial Appeal under the caption: CITY STOPS COUNTER STEPS TO THREAT OF MASS MARCH, it was reported that Mayor Henry Loeb was studying what legal steps could be taken to prevent another mass march, and among the remedies considered were: Court Injunctions against Leaders; Resumption of the Curfew; and the Placing of Leaders under Peace and Financial Responsibility.

In a story in the Press Scimitar of 4/2/68 under the caption: COUNCIL TALKS NEW STRIKE ROLL, it was reported that the City Council was calling for resumption of mediation talks with the Garbage Strikers.

C. O. M. E. held a strategy meeting at Clayborn Temple at 10AM on 4/2/68 in which the ministers associated explored the possibility of securing O. E. O. and W. C. P. C. money to pay for an office for them, and their operations. At another meeting of C. O. M. E. leaders at the Lorraine Motel 6PM 4/2/68, some of the Members asked for the removal of James Morris Lawson as leader of COME.

The body of Larry Payne who had been shot during the rioting 3/28/68 was seen laying in state at Clayborn Temple since 4/1/68 was viewed by thousands of strikers and Strike Sympathisers. The Funeral was held in the Temple in the afternoon with the Rev. B. T. Damas officiating. Interment was in the New Park Cemetery on Lake Road. No incidents were reported during the Funeral.

Bayard Rustin of the A. Phillip Randolph Inst., and Victor Gotbaum, Executive Director of the District Council #37 of the AFSCME Union announced that 5000 people

April 2, 1968 (continued)

from all over the U.S. would converge on Memphis at 30,000 people would be in Memphis for the Martin Luther King Jr.

Intelligence sources revealed that Charles B. Smith and other invader leaders were meeting with other Black activists and King aides, and that Martin Luther King was being planned for 4/3/68 and 9PM in re; the funding of the invaders by NAACP.

April 2, 1968 a Mr. Robert Campbell of 501 N. Main St. Memphis, Tenn. advised that he had received a telephone call from Columbus, Ga. associated who was a reliable man, who stated that if he went to Memphis for his March, he would be killed by a Memphis Policeman who would be blamed for it. Mr. Campbell where he had received this information.

4/2/68 at a Press Conference at Clayborn Temple, Rev. Jesse Jackson, an S. C. L. C. member announced that he would be making a march on 4/3/68. Rev. Kyles also announced that he would be making a march on 4/3/68. Rev. Jesse Jackson called for targets, Coca Cola Bottling Co.; Haris Bread Co. Test Dairy Products. He accused white racism for the riot.

In an interview with Inspector Tines on 4/2/68, a local Negro Minister accused Rev. James Morris for the riot on 3/28/68. He also accused Lawson, indicating that he felt that Vasco and Maxine Smith, could not longer maintain effective leadership of the march.

Spot men for the Negro Ministers in violation of the curfew would ignore any injunction against holding a Mass March. They reported instances of strike oriented harassment.

April 3, 1968.

Under the caption of DAY OF DECISIONS, the Commercial Appeal carried a picture of Mayor Henry Loeb, and Director of the Federal Building seeking a nationwide march to be led in Memphis by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The picture shows a picture of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and a picture of Mayor Henry Loeb.

The Commercial Appeal of 3/3/68 under the caption: HOW TO IGNORE ANY COURT BANS, carried a story stating, "such things as injunctions or peace marches."

The headlines of the Press Scimitar of 4/3/68 under the caption: MARCH PLANNED LED BY KING, UNION MEN., and

that I was an active participant in the assassination of Dr. King. I had not a scintilla of an arm come to Dr. King and his death either directly or indirectly in my life has been that he was assassinated in his death give unequivocal to reasonable and prudent of fire and police would his city knowing full well immediately.

evidenced by the fact a report when he arrived on police protection to him. efforts to even learn his did not learn of his plans arrived at that location. We could under the circumstances practically impossible to has been proven in other were measures we should once and didn't, as viewed we did not have extreme e. We thought at the time e doing our best to provide soever as to our handling any quarter.

ve E. E. Redditt from the re station, which has been as well as the principal acer and an assassination and it has not been disputative Redditt's life. In view l, both Black officers, had of information as to the ors during the sanitation rding any threats against onal and logical course of ide Detective Redditt and ould have been a callous

years is that the threat the Revolutionary African advised of it by a Federal the U.S. Secret Service. It wo separate threats other sifted through my memory not been able to further

r, the stark fact remains, t's life was threatened as ate that action be taken to not taken solely by myself ment officers at the time.

Detective Redditt did not at that time, nor has he since, questioned the legitimacy of the threat. His only reaction at the time was that he was not personally afraid. And his courage has never been questioned especially as evidenced by his service to the department during the sanitation strike. Detective Redditt has never since that time raised any question with me in any way concerning the action which was taken. I have seen him on numerous occasions during the past 10 years, including a meeting on the street in the spring of 1976 when he advised me of his then intentions to run for Congress as a Republican against the incumbent congressman, Harold Ford. He did not at that time or at any other time raise the question of any doubt as to my actions on April 4, 1968.

In view of the physical location of the fire station, it would have been impossible for Detective Redditt or a score or more officers at that location to have prevented the assassination. It would not have been physically possible from that location to have even seen from where the shot was fired. Patrolman Richmond, as dedicated a professional officer as any I've known, was at the fire station and observed Dr. King when he was shot and he was in no position to prevent the assassination and could not do so. Detective Redditt could not have either and I believe he has so testified in executive session before this committee. Memoranda prepared contemporaneously with the events by Redditt and Richmond, and especially by Patrolman Richmond, and contained in the homicide files of the department should dispel all doubts as to the nature of the assignment (it being one of surveillance and not of security) and the effectiveness of these men at the fire station. I believe the committee has interviewed Detective Redditt and Patrolman Richmond and that they will testify before this committee. I respectfully request that the statements of Redditt and Richmond as contained in the homicide files and which I have furnished this committee be made a part of the record of these hearings.

The records will reflect Detective Redditt was removed from his post at approximately 4 p.m. on April 4, 1968. Since I was in Federal court all day that day and considering the time when Dr. King was shot, I do not believe Detective Redditt was removed after I returned from court but that he was at the department and had already been removed.

There apparently has been a persistent effort to prove a theory or allegation that the FBI engaged in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. King and that I, because of my past association with the FBI, was a party to that conspiracy. It is unbelievable to me that the FBI would even entertain such an idea. It is ludicrous and preposterous that I would be a party to such a thing either directly or indirectly. And now lately, as reported in the news media, the ridiculous charge has been made that former and off-duty FBI agents assassinated Dr. Martin Luther King. Anyone, for whatever evil or ulterior purposes, can dream up preposterous theories and charges. Proving those theories or charges with truth and facts is another matter and has not been accomplished.

I have been deeply disturbed that in view of my public service and reputation in the community, I have been viciously and deliberately maligned and slandered—apparently without recourse.

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